

Daniel 6:1-15 – Caught in Prayer

The Babylonian empire had fallen but Daniel was still standing. The new king was Darius, the Mede. The big question with a regime change is whether it will be better or worse than the previous regime. Chapter three was about God's deliverance of Daniel's three friends. Chapter six is an account of how God delivered Daniel. Both chapters contain accounts of God's deliverance. But there were two different kings with two seemingly different attitudes. By the time this chapter occurred, king Cyrus may have already issued the decree for the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. In this chapter, we have a hint that Jerusalem was on Daniel's mind. In chapter 9, we will have more than a hint that Daniel was thinking about Jerusalem and praying for its restoration. Did Daniel hope to finally return to Jerusalem?

Read Daniel 6:1-9.

What officials did king Darius set up over the kingdom? Do you think "the whole kingdom" refers to all of Babylonia or to all of the Medo-Persian empire? Your answer will probably depend on whether you think Darius and Cyrus were the same person. (6:1-2)

What was Daniel's position in the new regime? Why do you think Darius chose Daniel to this high position? (6:2)

How well did Daniel do in his new position in the new regime? ESV and NKJV have "excellent spirit". NASB has "extraordinary spirit". NIV has "exceptional qualities". (6:3)

We know that Darius was impressed with Daniel. How did the satraps and Daniel's fellow high officials feel about him? The high officials and satraps had a plan to dig up corruption charges or charges of incompetence against Daniel to take him down. Why did that plan fail? What was their plan B? Why did they want to take Daniel down? (6:4-5)

In verse 6, plan B involved king Darius. What lie did the officials tell in verse 7? Was Daniel on board with this plan? What was the officials' recommendation to the king? Why did they feel the king would be agreeable to their suggestion? How did the king respond to their recommendation? Why was it important for their recommendation to become a law? It seems strange to me that a law would be passed that was only in effect for one thirty day period. If it was annual (Darius month), then people would have needed to follow the law even after he was dead. Either way it sounds unusual to me but they did things differently in ancient Medo-Persia. (6:6-9)

Read Daniel 6:10-15.

We already see one difference between chapter 3 and chapter 6. Nebuchadnezzar was the driving force behind the golden image and making everyone bow down to it. Darius was tricked into requiring people to exclusively worship him for thirty days. Also, Daniel was not forced to worship Darius. What was the problem? Would it have been so bad for Daniel not to pray for thirty days? Did Daniel know he was breaking the law? We are told to obey our rulers. Was it right for Daniel to disobey the law of the Medes and Persians and if so, why? How often did Daniel pray? Was there any significance to that number? Why did he pray facing Jerusalem? See 1 Kings 8:48. (6:10)

In verse 11, what did the conspirators find Daniel doing? In verse 12, how did the conspirators box in king Darius? What harm had Daniel done to the other officials? (6:11-12)

In verse 13, what was the conspirators' accusation against Daniel? What part of their accusation was not true? (6:13)

In verse 14, how did Darius react when he heard the accusation? Do you think Darius knew that he had been tricked by the conspirators to make the law which could take down Daniel? How was his reaction different from Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to Daniel's three friends who did not bow down to the golden image? Was Darius upset with Daniel? (6:14)

In verse 15, after the king tried to figure out a way to deliver Daniel, what did the conspirators say to the king? (6:15)

Based on chapter six, what was Daniel's first allegiance and first priority? Do we have any record of Daniel cheating the king out of money? Do we have any record of Daniel speaking against the king? This example is not exactly the same, but what if you were excelling at your job and those at your company, who were jealous, recommended that everyone should be required to work on Sundays. What would you do if your boss agreed to the "work on Sundays" requirement?

In 2015, Kim Davis, who was the Rowan County (KY) Clerk, went to jail for 5 days for not issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. What would you do if you were a county clerk who was ordered by a judge to issue same-sex marriage licenses?